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Quaestor
Battle for Detente

Roy Hughes MP
Common Market

Harry Smith, Pat Sloan
Jürgen Kuczynski
Social Contract and Inflation

W. H. Evans
Environment and Socialism

Dilip Bose and others
Tributes to R. Palme Dutt

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LABOUR MONTHLY

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THE BATTLE FOR DETENTE GOES ON

Quaestor

DETENTE—a relaxation of international tension and fear: yet a battle? How can that be? Yes, it seems a contradiction—but it is one of the contradictions in real life through which mankind makes progress.

1. A Vicious Attack on Detente

Agreements at top level between the United States and the Soviet Union during the last three years have won world-wide approval from the vast majority of political, economic and other spokesmen of public opinion. One of these agreements, reached at Washington on October 18, 1972, was that the United States would unconditionally end all discrimination against Soviet trade, while the Soviet Union would pay the US what the latter required in recompense for lend-lease supplies during the second world war.

It was in virtue of this agreement that nearly two years ago the US government introduced the appropriate bills into Congress. But immediately there broke out a raging campaign of opposition, which ended after months of discussion in 'amendments' being adopted which in practice destroyed the original purpose. One laid down the condition that the Soviet Union should change its emigration laws (allegedly in favour of those Jewish citizens who supposedly wish to go to Israel) and that a special organisation be set up in the State Department to decide within 18 months whether this was being done —a manifest attempt to interfere in Soviet internal affairs. A second insisted on certain Soviet domestic economic information being supplied to the US. A third limited credits granted for Soviet-American trade by the Export-Import Bank to no more than $75 million a year, and only for four years—and then only on the condition that the first demand about emigration was accepted.

These impudent 'amendments' were sponsored by a notorious anti-Soviet propagandist, Senator Henry Jackson. The Soviet government had given clear warnings that double-dealing of this kind wouldn't pay. As recently as October 15, speaking at a dinner in Moscow for American businessmen, Leonid Brezhnev had told them so in blunt language, adding: 'It's time you realised that such attempts at interference in our internal affairs can produce only harm,' and that they would hamper further co-operation. On October 26, in a

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letter kept private for nearly two months, Foreign Minister Gromyko wrote to Secretary of State Kissinger reminding him that the stories about alleged Soviet pledges regarding emigration which were being circulated by the Jackson gang were, as he well knew, nothing but inventions. Yet the campaign went on. On December 19, therefore, the Telegraph Agency of the USSR published Gromyko's letter, together with its own authorised statement that the only basis on which Soviet-American relations could develop was 'full equality of the sides and non-interference in each other's affairs'. The Soviet press continued these warnings.

But all of them were dismissed in a manner familiar to those who have studied similar periods in British relations with the USSR. The Gromyko statement was 'largely for internal circulation': it was 'face-saving', said Jackson (*Times*, Washington, December 19); 'no more than a face-saving exercise by the Soviet leadership', said the *Times* US economics correspondent in Washington—rashly echoed by its Moscow correspondent, Edmund Stevens, who informed the world that 'Western observers tend to agree that it is simply a face-saving gesture for the record' (December 20). That day both houses of Congress approved the bills—and President Ford put his signature to them on January 3.

Then, of course, came the pay-off—or, as a writer in the Moscow *New Times* justifiably put it (January 24), 'the boomerang'. On January 14, 1975, the Soviet government informed the US that in these circumstances it considered out of the question 'putting into effect' the Soviet-American trade agreement of 1972 (not, as the lying capitalist press said, that that agreement was being 'repudiated' or 'cancelled' or 'torn up').

The boomerang certainly took effect. The diehard knowalls on both sides of the Atlantic did their best, in the circumstances. Jackson tried to face it out with the usual brazenness of a pickpocket caught in the act: the Soviet action was 'disappointing' (*Daily Telegraph*, January 17) and even 'a breach of faith' (*Telegraph*, January 21). On this side the *Daily Telegraph* (January 25) said that 'it was the Russians who scuppered the 1972 trade agreement because they were not getting absolutely everything they wanted'; and the *Times* (January 17) printed a long and involved article by that well-known 'specialist' on Soviet affairs, Robert Conquest, assuring the public—amid a torrent of abuse of the Soviet leaders—that Jackson actually has done a great service, having 'forced the Politburo out into the open.' But such was not the general attitude in the United States.

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Kissinger told his press conference on January 14 that 'he had repeatedly given warning that the Soviet Union would react with such a repudiation if it felt pressured beyond what it had agreed to,' and, wrote the *Times* regular Washington correspondent, he 'put no blame whatever on the Soviet Union' (January 15). Officials and politicians in Washington were 'shocked', he said. 'Support for the Russians' action is being expressed 'among the American business community in Moscow', cabled the somewhat chastened Mr Stevens the same day: he instanced in particular John Connor, senior American representative at the Moscow office of the US-USSR Mixed Trade Council, who said 'the Soviet attitude was fully justified' (*Times*, January 16). Many important businessmen in the US said much the same thing. No doubt it was under the influence of these reactions that Kissinger returned to the attack on January 16, saying in a television interview that 'it was not the Soviet Union that had failed to fulfil the trade agreement' (*Times* Washington correspondent, January 17). Kissinger also said that, although 'detente has had a set-back,' he believed nevertheless that the need to 'prevent nuclear war . . . will enable us to move forward again.'

Nevertheless, the ugly behaviour of the US Congress caused widespread international repercussions. For one thing, the new Trade Act turned out to involve a serious threat to Latin American relations with the US—and twenty Latin American states, at a special session of the Organisation of American States on January 24, *unanimously* condemned the Act. Venezuela and Ecuador, as oil-exporting countries, are deprived of duty-free entry to the US of their manufactured goods—'an act of economic aggression'; Brazil called similar restrictions on even non-exporters of oil (textiles, iron or steel) 'a grave threat to the interests of Latin America'; and all of them objected to the uncertainty created by the threat to cut off their tariff preferences in the US if they form all-in agencies to sell their raw materials (*Times*, January 30).

Nor was criticism confined to such weaker countries. The influential Japanese *Mainichi Shimbun* wrote: 'We hope that the US and the Soviet Union will quickly settle this matter, and prevent even a temporary turning back of peaceful coexistence.' Between them, it said, the easing of tension was 'the foundation of world peace in our nuclear age.' Similarly, Mr H. D. Genscher, the German Federal Republic's foreign minister, said it was a common interest of all friends and allies of the US 'that this issue be localised, i.e. that the policy of detente does not suffer basically on account of this event.' And *Le Monde*—the most respected capitalist paper in France—

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carried a sober statement by Jacques Sauvagnargues, the French foreign minister, that the Soviet government was evidently rejecting terms which it 'could regard as encroaching on its sovereignty.' The international rebuke to the Americans was thus almost explicit.

How far it will affect US policy has yet to be seen.

2. But What about Disarmament?

One journalist in Washington—evidently not acquainted with *The Essays of Elia* and Charles Lamb's dissertation, 150 years ago, on how first the swineherd Ho-Ti, and then all China, began burning down their houses in order to produce roast pig—called Senator Jackson and his political hooligans people who had 'set fire to the building in order to make their cup of tea.'

The question now is whether the lesson has been learnt on disarmament—an issue which one would think at least as important as that of the United States' good faith in signing its trade agreement with the USSR in 1972.

It is appropriate to recall that, on that occasion, it also signed a treaty with the USSR on limitation of anti-ballistic missile systems (May 26, 1972), which declared in its preamble that both parties intended 'to achieve at the earliest possible date the cessation of the arms race and to take effective measures toward reduction in strategic arms, nuclear disarmament, and general and complete disarmament.' On July 3, 1974, it signed an agreement with the USSR which made the dispositions and dates, arising out of the 1972 treaty, more precise, and a treaty on the limitation of underground nuclear tests as from March 1976. Both parties repeated the pledge of 1972, with the addition that general and complete disarmament should be 'under strict and effective international control'. And at a meeting between President Ford and Leonid Brezhnev near Vladivostok on November 23 and 24, 1974, they called the agreements already reached between them 'a good beginning in the process of creating guarantees against the outbreak of nuclear conflict and war in general.' They declared that they 'attach high importance to the negotiations on mutual reduction of forces and armaments, and associated measures in central Europe'—seeking 'mutually acceptable solutions *on the basis of the principle of undiminished security for any of the parties, and the prevention of unilateral military advantage.*'

It is clear from this context that a successful outcome to the conference on disarmament in central Europe—now proceeding in

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Vienna—would be a further step in detente in spite of the set-back over trade.

How are the two sides approaching the question at Geneva?

As regards the Soviet Union—over and above the proposals of earlier post-war years—the position is pretty clear. After successively proposing general nuclear disarmament, then the setting up of nuclear-free zones in several important regions of the world, then (more recently) a 10 per cent cut in armaments and armies by the five major powers, it entered the Vienna talks with quite concrete proposals, suited to the limited area of the world involved, and taking account of the proviso that there should be undiminished security for every state, and no unfair advantage for any.

At first (in 1974) it proposed that in 1975 the Soviet, GDR, Polish and Czechoslovak armies should be cut by a total of 20,000 men with appropriate cuts in arms and armament, with similar cuts in those of the US, Britain, Canada, Federal Germany, Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg. In 1976 each state would make a further 5 per cent cut, and in 1977 another 10 per cent.

When this proposal was rejected by the capitalist states, the Soviet Union made a compromise proposal (November 1974): that the USSR and the US should be the first to cut their armies (with the corresponding arms and equipment) by 10,000 men each, *following which* all the other states in their respective groups should cut by a total of 10,000 in each group—all in the course of 1975.

Against these successive schemes, the Western powers have (from November 22, 1973, onwards) consistently held to one conception throughout: that only the Soviet Union and the United States should cut their armies, and by 69,000 and 29,000 respectively, while all other states should *not* cut their armies for an undefined period. Yet the British Army of the Rhine and the Federal German army together alone total 75 per cent of all Nato land forces! Moreover, aircraft and nuclear weapon units are to be excluded from the cuts altogether. It will be clear that this attitude not only leaves very little of a tangible step to reducing the armaments burden in Europe, but tries to establish that very disproportion in security and one-sided advantage which was specifically condemned in the preliminary agreement preceding the Vienna talks, and which the Americans are pledged to avoid.

In the fifth meeting of the eleven delegations which opened in Vienna on January 30 this year, the Western governments maintained their stone-wall attitude—which didn't prevent the *Daily Telegraph*

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diplomatic correspondent (January 31, 1975) writing, as bold as brass, that 'Russia and her Warsaw Pact allies intend to mark time.'

But, in attempting to distract attention from the meaning of this stand, the cold-war (or anti-detente) propagandists in the US made some interesting admissions—and their British fellow-thinkers have not been able to conceal them. Thus, both the 'strident critics of the Ford-Brezhnev deal' (Henry Stanhope, *Times* defence correspondent, January 30, 1975) and those British pacifists whose motto at all times is that the Russians are as bad as the Americans have made much of the fact that the Vladivostok agreement fixed *for the first time* a maximum of 1,320 multiple independently targeted re-entry (MIRV) missiles for both sides. Now Mr Stanhope reveals: 'It is now generally agreed that the Soviet proposal was originally for a limit of 1,100 missiles, and that the figure of 1,320 was put forward by the American delegates.'

Perhaps the most egregious example, however, has been the story —peddled for many months by both British and American capitalist newspapers—that the Soviet Union in fact is spending more on war purposes than the US. Pentagon officials even gave the 'figures'— $117,000 million by the USSR, they alleged, as against $94,000 million by the US (*Times* Washington correspondent, February 4, 1975).

Now in fact the Soviet defence expenditure has been published for years. From 1970 onwards until 1973 it stood at 17,900 million roubles, while total budget expenditure went up from 154,600 million roubles to 184,000 million; this meant that defence expenditure went down from 11.5 per cent of the total to 9.7 per cent. In 1974 total budget expenditure was approximately 200,300 million roubles, while on defence the expenditure was 17,600 million—less than 8.6 per cent. And for 1975, out of total budget expenditure of 208,500 million, defence is budgeted at 17,400 million—8.4 per cent. This is far below the giant (and growing) US figures.

So much was well known already—to those who took the trouble to check the statistics. But now the Pentagon officials have blurted out, according to the *Times* Washington correspondent already quoted, the astonishing admission that they arrived at their fancy figure of Soviet expenditure 'by estimating what Americans would have to pay for what the Russians are producing'! Yes, there it is in black and white! In the US, where the biggest private armaments monopolies in the world are piling up colossal profits every year out of the state orders engineered by their like-minded government contacts, on the basis of the fear and hate propaganda enveloping

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Congressmen and Senators, they have 'estimated' Soviet defence expenditure as though it were conducted by merchants of death like themselves. In fact, of course, it is conducted by state-owned enterprise, with profit publicly planned as well as production, under the most strict public supervision by workers' inspection organisations as well as State Bank and government controllers, and under an 'economy regime' which (despite occasional lapses) is on the whole the most rigid the world has ever seen.

So detente is under threat in this sphere also—and no less from those British politicians and officials whose motto, up to now, has been: 'Me too.'

3. Cross-Roads for the Labour Government

The reader will have noticed that on these two main issues of international relations—trade and armaments—it has been the United States which has been making the running . . . backwards. The question arises for British labour: What is Britain's part in all this?

Mr Richard Davy, one of the *Times* commentators on foreign affairs, admitted (February 11) that 'detente did not receive high priority among Conservative policies.' Most socialists, and certainly most readers of *Labour Monthly*, would say that this is a considerable understatement. The point is, however, what has changed since the Labour government took over?

Take 'defence', as expenditure on war preparations of all kinds is jocularly called. The Labour Party conference demanded a cut of £1,000 million in this expenditure. Defence minister Roy Mason dismissed this in February as merely 'a slogan', i.e. a vote-catching device. In fact, defence expenditure was £3,354 million in 1973-74 under the Tories, and budgeted by them at £3,654 million for 1974-75: but the Labour government by supplementary estimates this January raised this figure to £4,070 million. And its latest estimates lay down £4,295 million next year (1975-76) and £4,567 million the year after that. Thus Britain steadily *increases* its expenditure, while the Soviet Union steadily *decreases* it.

Nor has this a merely statistical aspect. Every speech of Roy Mason's on defence contains a bitterly anti-Soviet streak, indicating the USSR as a potential enemy. And it is his department which was responsible in January for issuing that notoriously lying and inflammatory recruiting poster, which implied that the Soviet Union was an enemy of Britain and of peace. It is not surprising, therefore,

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that the Labour government has been backing the US to the full at Vienna.

It is in Britain, too, that the Tory newspapers have been able to carry on a sustained campaign of falsehood about the Soviet Union's alleged naval activities, without one word of condemnation or dissociation from official quarters. For months they talked about the USSR acquiring 'naval bases' in the countries around the Indian Ocean—until every country concerned issued flat denials, when the newspaper alarmists relapsed into mumbling about Soviet warships having been 'seen', or 'calling for supplies', or '*planning* a base', and so on. But the why and wherefore of the campaign became clear when Mr Mason's defence review at the beginning of December 1974 revealed that the Labour government has granted the US permission to set up its air base in Diego Garcia, the Indian Ocean island about which E. P. Young wrote in our December issue. All this because of an alleged Soviet 'threat'. Yet the Soviet Union many months ago proposed withdrawing *all* foreign naval and air forces from the territories bordering on the Indian Ocean, making it a zone of peace. Since the Diego Garcia decision was announced, India, Australia, New Zealand, Sri Lanka (Ceylon), Malaysia, Mauritius and half a dozen other countries have emphatically protested, demanding that the whole area be neutralised.

Thus the idea of detente has not, so far, made any impact in one important sphere of British foreign policy since Labour came in. What about another, that which affects the European Security Conference of 35 governments which has been going on at Geneva for more than two years?

It has long been common knowledge that under the Tories the British government was most conspicuously dragging its feet where the Geneva conference was concerned. But, all of a sudden, the Tory press was faced with an unexpected turn in US policy. On January 23, Vincent Ryder, *Daily Telegraph* Washington correspondent, let out the alarming news that, in the view of State Department officials, 'substantial progress has been made on European security', and that they even seem likely to 'coax their Nato allies into agreeing to a full-dress conference of the heads of 35 governments' in Helsinki this summer. Immediately a howl went up—obviously from the Foreign Office, since it was voiced by the diplomatic correspondent of the same paper. 'Britain and her European allies have been taken aback by . . . the sudden rush of American optimism,' he wrote (January 24)—though there had been no evidence whatever that the 'European allies' had voiced such an opinion.

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Though some progress had been made, 'West Europeans' believed there was still a long way to go, he wrote—and he warned that 'negotiations will now be carried out under pressure from the Americans and the Russians to get on with them.' The correspondent then blurted out, however, a still more damaging remark: 'The original intention of Western negotiators was that Russia and Eastern Europe should be opened up to Western influence.' Shorn of its polite dressing, what that statement means is that they hoped to achieve—by economic and political pressure—what the capitalist states had failed to do by invasion in 1917-22, by economic blockade during the famine years, by Hitler's invasion in 1941-45, and by giving devasted Russia the cold shoulder during post-war reconstruction.

But 'the best laid plans o' mice an' men gang aft agley'—and though any individual Western country, or group of them, in theory could block a summit, he says, the correspondent was forced to the melancholy conclusion that they are more likely 'to fight shy of opposing both super-powers and being accused of wrecking East-West detente.'

This did not mean that the battle was over, of course. Next day, for example, the *Daily Telegraph*, in an angry editorial reproached the US for abandoning the ideas she once supported, and furiously asked: 'Is the new mode to be that Russia must always get what she wants, simply in order that Dr Kissinger can continue to claim that detente still exists?' (note the frustrated cry of the forces who hoped that detente was all over!). And the hostile articles which marked Harold Wilson's send-off to Moscow on February 13 were equally significant.

However, by then there were increasing signs that the Western powers, faced with repeated Soviet declarations that their search for detente goes on, would accept the Soviet Union's proposal to wind up the European Security Conference this summer with a top-level meeting at Helsinki.

But British Labour still needs to be on its guard. The enemies of detente are still among us—and holding influential positions. If Harold Wilson and James Callaghan during their visit to Moscow have really taken the cue from the reported change in the American position on speeding up the European Security Conference, they need in turn to change Britain's position at Vienna and to make a firm turn towards expanding British-Soviet trade. Nothing less than that will serve the interests of the British people—but it will involve a real break with the past. Britain under a Labour government is really at the cross-roads now. *February 17, 1975*

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COMMON MARKET

Roy Hughes MP

JUST before the second world war, when I was attending elementary school in the South Wales valleys, our class was often told by the teacher to take out the map of the world. Then it was explained to us with some pride that the one-fifth in red was the British Empire and that our tiny island was the hub of this great enterprise.

This memory becomes vivid when considering what has happened since then, and particularly when one witnesses the present clamour of capitalist interests to try and ensure that Britian remains in the Common Market.

We emerged from the second world war victorious, but our strength as a nation had been severely undermined, and the country was soon faced with the reality of a chronic balance of payments deficit.

Although Churchill earlier proclaimed that he had not become head of HM government to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire, he underestimated the determination of the colonial peoples to gain their freedom. In fact, it is difficult to believe that any British government could have withstood this pressure, but fortunately the Labour government faced the situation realistically and soon India, the jewel of Queen Victoria's crown, won its independence. The process continued, though under successive Conservative governments, and eventually, with the exception of a few tiny outposts, all the African and Asian territories became sovereign states in their own right.

With the Suez débâcle of 1956 the sun finally set on British imperialist aspirations, but yet the capitalist class, with the full support of their friends in the media, were soon looking for other fields to conquer. Dean Acheson, the American statesman, proclaimed that Britain had lost an empire and had not found a new role in the world, but it was at this time that Macmillan, the Tory prime minister, came to the conclusion that our future lay in the Common Market.

Now Britain as a nation imports large quantities of raw materials and 50 per cent of its food supplies, and these are paid for by the export of manufactured goods together with the provision of certain services such as shipping and insurance facilities. Bearing these facts in mind, it has always been my contention that, with the skill and experience of its people, Britain has the attributes necessary to maintain a high standard of living for its people.

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Admittedly we can no longer take the former colonial peoples for granted because they are now quite rightly seeking their place in the sun and demanding realistic prices for their products. In many ways as socialists we should welcome this development and the gradual ending of an era when a small part of the world grew affluent at the expense of the rest which languished in poverty.

Looking at Britain's economic situation in this way it becomes apparent that our natural trading partners are the underdeveloped countries whose economies are complementary to ours. We should be supplying the capital goods and the expertise that they so urgently require, and here the Middle East is the outstanding example. Many of the states in this region, through their huge oil revenues, are anxious to develop their economies at a rapid rate, and we should be assisting in this process.

In addition there is a need to maintain the strongest possible links with the Commonwealth countries, such as New Zealand, Australia and Canada, who over the years have supplied us with much of our food and at prices which have been of considerable benefit to ordinary families. Now, of course, and as long as we remain in the Common Market, levies have to be imposed on these traditional imports and the proceeds handed over to Brussels.

Furthermore our trade with the former colonial territories should be allowed to continue unrestricted, for this can be of mutual benefit. Certainly the obsession in recent years with the Common Market has meant that these countries have tended to look elsewhere, and the disruption of our sugar supplies is an example of this.

There seems to be little doubt that the European Free Trade Area (EFTA) would welcome us back, and it is highly likely that Denmark would follow our lead. Again, in East-West trade there is great untapped potential and the neglect in the past probably has its roots in ideology rather than economics. Trade along the lines outlined above would seem to be the natural way ahead for Britain, but big business with the multinationals to the fore had other ideas.

Firstly, they believe that there are rich pickings to be had from an expanded market of 250 million on the doorstep so to speak. Secondly, they see in the Treaty of Rome the means of preserving Western capitalism and of arresting the development towards socialism. Thirdly, they see Britain safely enveloped in the Market as a device to curb the British trade union movement and of spurring workpeople to greater effort. No thought was given to the fact that the endemic weakness of our industry is the failure on the part of capitalists to invest in it. In other words, they have neglected to

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provide the new machinery and equipment that is so vitally necessary to increase output.

Ever since entry into the EEC, investment abroad has accelerated whilst that at home has been neglected. With these factors in mind, big business, in its advocacy of the benefits of entry into the Common Market, paid little respect or attention to the vital aspects of British sovereignty and parliamentary democracy. As Tony Benn pointed out:

> British membership of the Community subjects all of us to laws and taxes which your MPs do not enact. Such laws and taxes are enacted by authorities (in Brussels) whom you do not directly elect, and cannot dismiss through the ballot box.

This basically is what membership of the Common Market means. Import duties are now imposed on lamb, sugar and other foods. The House of Commons is being inundated with hundreds of laws and regulations which there is no time even to discuss; even if there were, they would be unalterable because they take precedence over British legislation.

To some people the Common Market was to be the panacea for all our economic ills, but in fact our membership is simply draining away the very lifeblood of industry and commerce. It was a misguided belief that there would be short-term benefits to Britain from entry, and the official figures released a few weeks ago by Mr Peter Shore MP, secretary of state for trade, certainly dispelled any remaining doubts. Our deficit with the original six countries of the Market is now running at a rate of more than £2,000 million a year, and now accounts for the vast bulk of the non-oil deficit.

Food prices, which we were told would only be marginally affected by entry, have in fact rocketed, and approximately one-third of these increases are directly attributable to the Common Market. There will be further major increases up to 1978 to bring us into line, and this is regardless of what happens to world prices.

Other farcical aspects spring to mind, such as the denaturing of food by colouring it green or blue so that it is only fit to be consumed by animals. Huge surpluses of foodstuffs are accumulated and these are disposed of in the most unlikely ways, such as selling thousands of tons of butter to the Soviet Union at 7p per pound.

How long is this state of affairs to continue, for this is the question that the British people will be called upon to answer? In fairness, the Labour government has honoured its promise to hold a referendum, and now it is up to our movement to organise its campaign so that an overwhelming vote is recorded for withdrawal. Certainly big business,

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aided by the media, will be prepared to spend millions of pounds to delude the people, but we must ensure that they do not succeed.

The pioneers of our movement realised long ago that capitalism is an economic jungle, and the Treaty of Rome is nothing more than a charter for this same creed. Aneurin Bevan surely came to a logical conclusion when he said that the jungle is not made more civilised by making it bigger.

BRITAIN'S CRISIS AND THE SOCIAL CONTRACT

Harry Smith
Editor
Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers
Technical, Administrative and Supervisory Section

'EARNINGS may be rising at 37 per cent a year,' trumpeted the *Times* on January 21, 1975. The rest of the press followed suit, except that they concentrated on the 28 per cent increase in basic weekly wage rates in 1974. Editorials and news features weighed in with sharp, sometimes hysterical, comment to demand action of the government. Once again wage increases were held to be responsible for the total economic, political and social crisis and the naughty workers must be dealt with by a firm government hand.

The figures selected to point the argument go to demonstrate the invariable bias of the capitalist mass media. The official statistics which triggered off this outburst show that during 1974 earnings rose by 25 per cent, and the retail price index by 19 per cent. The use of national average earnings is dangerous if the figure is not further analysed. Special case settlements and the London allowance are included, for example. Then, when allowance is made for increased taxation and other factors, the reality is that, on average, workers have only just managed to make their actual take-home pay move with the index. The index in any case understates the real increase in the cost of living. It thus emerges that the hue and cry is about workers not quite managing to hold on to their original real earnings during 1974.

It must be bluntly stated that Britain's economic crisis is caused by several world-size economic and social factors. Some are:

The countries of working class power limit the area of the world which capitalism can exploit.

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Producers of primary products, from oil to sugar, insist on getting a fairer price than hitherto for their products (still in many countries produced under atrocious conditions).

The growth of the world's population and the demand that the new mouths be fed works through in a variety of ways as a limitation on supplies.

Competition between trade rivals sharpens as the new cyclical crisis of capitalism develops. The weaker British capitalism bears the brunt.

Britain's membership of the Common Market lays her economy wide open to the thrust of stronger rivals within the Market.

These and other forces and factors cause a general crisis in all the economically advanced nations, and particularly savagely in the case of Britain. They brutally push against our whole economy, severely distorting and reshaping Britain's economic conditions with the rest of the world and creating sharp internal developments, the one hitting us hardest being the increase in the cost of living.

Anyone who then has the neck to argue that British workers are responsible for Britain's economic crisis, and are not the victims of the modern workings of capitalism, is either idiotic or class blind.

The fact is that if all workers did without any increases in money wages these world economic forces would contribute to the drastic forcing up of the cost of living. We would literally move rapidly towards penury, and to starvation beyond that.

Workers are not responsible for the crisis. They are responsible for ensuring that they and their families manage to support existence in the economic chaos of the system. They must and do defend their living standards by never-ending struggle against capital, to seek to hold the real level of their wages. Despite their best efforts they just about manage to run on the spot or slip back a little bit.

It is ludicrous for Denis Healey to hint that he will introduce a tough budget unless wage increases slow down dramatically or that others threaten the workers with consequential unemployment. On January 21 the *Daily Mail* attributed to Denis Healey the thought: 'I'll take it away in tax.' There is no doubt that this is a fair summary of his position and that he joins in the attitude that workers cause the crisis, have had enormous wage increases and should be stripped of their ill-gotten gains. This is particularly incredible when it is recognised that he has already had his cut anyway. We must pause to think, when his position so clearly and accurately reflects the lies, bleatings and demands of the kept press of capitalism. Whose side are you on, brother? We know whose side Tony Benn is on. He recently said: 'British inflation is the result of over-priced goods produced with outdated equipment by underpaid workers.'

A further cause for concern is that the TUC leadership feel it

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necessary to talk about tightening up the social contract, that device with which they aimed to get workers to ease off their wage struggle and which rests implicitly on the proposition that workers do cause the crisis and by moderating or limiting their wage struggle could cause the crisis to be resolved. Not on your Nelly! Neither in whole nor in part. Only a moment's reflection about the forces described earlier will demonstrate this point.

The original proposition is not true. The Social Contract is therefore a nonsense—the idea of screwing it tighter a still bigger nonsense. At a time when the cyclical economic downswing of capitalism is causing a rapid increase in the number of workers unemployed, the proposition that reduced wage activity will prevent or limit unemployment is bunkum. In our present economic system only a successful struggle to maintain and advance wages, by maintaining some demand in the economy, can restrain the sharpening plunge towards mass unemployment. The very reverse of the position which the pundits outline.*

The organised workers have no option but to continue to use their full power to hold on to or improve their real wages as a protection against the blows of the system. It is surely time that the TUC leadership, the Labour Party and the Labour government declared that the culprit causing the crisis is capitalism, and began to support deep cutting changes in the system itself. It is surely time that organised workers drew fundamental lessons from their never-ending, running-on-the-spot economic struggles: to turn from dealing with effects to dealing with the cause, capitalism; to think in terms of an immediate radical programme including:

A large extension of effective public ownership, as areas of industry fail.

A fundamental redistribution of wealth.

The elimination of all policy hangovers from the days of British imperialism, such as ending military expenditure abroad.

Necessary economic measures, as price and import controls, control of capital exports, realisation of foreign assets, etc.

The elimination of waste in our society, starting with a drastic cut in the still escalating arms expenditure.

The direction of investment towards achieving growth in industry or improving social services.

The redirection of foreign trade towards the stable markets and economic circumstances of the socialist lands.

Such a programme would be a first step towards modifying capitalism in the direction of socialism, and would open up the possibility of

* For a fuller discussion, see the pamphlet, *Social Contract: Cure-All or Con-Trick?*, Bert Ramelson, *Communist Party*, 32pp, 15p.

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further steps. Basically inimical to all that capitalism stands for, it goes completely against the pure capitalist philosophy and arrangements of the Common Market. It therefore supposes that we will leave the Market and assert the sovereignty of the British people over their own affairs.

Another problem which looms is that the new imminent nationalisations, of aircraft and shipbuilding, and the government's launching of the National Enterprise Board, are causing an upsurge in worker interest in participation and workers' control. Naturally, the sense of alienation and crisis which workers feel, the particular incompetence, weakness and failure of British capitalism, feeds the thought that perhaps the workers' organisations should be represented on the boards of public and private concerns. Superficially attractive though the idea might be, it is particularly dangerous that workers' organisations move towards helping capitalism to run itself. It is impossible to create islands of socialist or worker enterprise in a system in which private capitalism still dominates. It would be a diversion of necessary effort if, by our actions, our movement suggests that union representation on the boards is the answer, in whole or part, to the problems of our economy, or Britain's and the world's economic crisis.

So long as the private sector dominates in Britain, the most that can be achieved is some worker influence over affairs. Methods of participation should be devised which underline the independent role of the workers. For example, the mode of influencing the aircraft and shipbuilding industries could be by establishing the following points:

That the industry be responsible, through a minister, to parliament.

That the governing boards be chosen from individuals of personal merit and experience, drawn from the worker movement.

That an absolute right of consultation be accorded at all levels in the unions.

That unions be clearly and effectively recognised.

That clear and specific terms of reference be drawn up for the nationalised industries, including a strong emphasis on their social role.

Space does not permit a full definition of these concepts. Suffice it to say that worker influence could be exerted by worker organisations through parliament, by the work of individuals on the boards, in consultation with and by direct action of trade unions. The insistence on individuals, rather than union-chosen representatives, being on the board avoids the conflict between the union represented and the union taking direct action. The system proposed creates a condition of maximum influence at the same time as the independence of unions

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is confirmed. The publishing of clear terms of reference for such industries also creates the basis on which political action can be deployed to fight out the role of each industry. They would enable the struggle to push the role of such industries towards socially sound policies to take place around a clear axis.

Finally, worker organisations must exert maximum pressure to maintain or improve real wages. Beyond that, they must increasingly understand the nature of capitalism and its crisis, broaden and widen the struggle against it in all socio-economic fields, maintain a fully independent political-industrial position and put their weight behind a programme of very deep cutting, anti-capitalist reform. For the rest, if the crisis continues to deepen, and British capitalism collapses, other questions would come on to the order of the day. Then we might see workers seize hold of their country's economic resources and emerge into a crisis-free, new system, replacing completely the instability and economic chaos of a capitalism winding towards its end.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS IN THE IMPERIALIST COUNTRIES— 1974 BALANCE, 1975 FORECAST

Jürgen Kuczynski*

IN last year's survey of the economy of the capitalist world we said (*Horizont*, No 4, 1974): 'For the first time since the end of the second world war we observe a unified downward movement of the economy in the imperialist countries. They have all been hit by a cyclical crisis of overproduction. For the first time since the second world war we can talk of a cyclical world-wide economic crisis of monopoly capitalism. It is not yet possible to assess how serious the crisis will be. But it is already obvious today that it has hit all imperialist countries.'

Now, a year later, the governments of the Western world talk about the worst crisis since the second world war, and make frightening comparisons with the biggest crisis in the whole history of capitalism, that of 1929-33. The Christmas number of the *Economist*

* This article is taken from a longer contribution which appeared in the Berlin journal, *Horizont*, No 4, 1975.

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begins its leader, not with 'good tidings', as has been the custom at this season for almost 2,000 years, but like this:

> For a generation the world has enjoyed its greatest boom. It is now suffering its greatest inflation and could shortly be struggling with its greatest slump. It does not want to believe this. The club representing the world's 24 richest capitalist economies, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, said this week that these countries 'face a test which is probably unprecedented outside time of war,' but then produced forecasts for 1975 that are less than horrific.

This is the latest tactic of monopoly capital: on the one hand they predict the worst for the future, so as to be able to explain to the working people that their only salvation is to tighten their belts, in other words to accept a fall in real wages; on the other hand they forecast an upswing of the economy in the second half of 1975, so as to provide capitalism and themselves with some sort of Dutch courage to make more profits.

According to a compilation by the West Berlin Institute of Economic Research (*Quarterly*, No 4, Berlin 1974) and the latest estimates of the OECD, the gross national product (GNP) in the world of monopoly capitalism developed as follows in 1973 and 1974:

Real Gross National Product (Percentage Change)

	1973	1974	1974 (OECD)
West Germany	+5.3	+1	+1
France	+6.0	+4½	+4¾
Great Britain	+5.7	−1	−½
Italy	+5.9	+3	+4¾
European Economic Community	+5.6	+2	—
European Industrial Countries	+5.3	+2	—
Japan	+10.5	0	−3¼
USA	+5.9	−½	−1¾
Non-European Industrial Countries	+6.8	0	—
Total—All Industrial Countries	+6.3	+1	+¼

According to the estimates of the West Berlin Institute, the GNP of the developed capitalist countries in 1974 rose by 1 per cent compared with a growth of 6 per cent in 1973. A month later than the West Berlin Institute, the OECD estimates a growth of only ¼ per cent for 1974. It appears more likely that, on the basis of the most recent figures, 1974 already shows a decline in the real gross capitalist world product compared with 1973.

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Two factors in particular contributed to the deterioration of the situation of the workers in 1974: increasing intensity of inflation and growing unemployment. Inflation developed as follows:

Increase in the Cost of Living Compared with Previous Year

	1973	1974*
West Germany	7.2	6.5
France	7.3	14.9
Great Britain	9.2	18.3
Italy	10.8	26.2
Japan	11.7	25.8
USA	6.2	12.1

* Most recently published figures.

In all imperialist countries—with the exception of West Germany—the rate of inflation measured by the cost of living is today about double what it was in 1973. Before looking more closely at the situation in the German Federal Republic, we have a table which appeared in the West German paper, *Die Welt*, December 18, 1974, on unemployment.

Country and Month	Number Unemployed (in thousands)		Percentage Increase
	1973	1974	
West Germany, November	332	799	141
France, October	452	630	39
Italy, September	951	1,003	5
Great Britain, November	494	630	26

And now back to the inflation league table. Prices in West Germany went up in 1974 compared with 1973, though not quite so rapidly as in the year before—but in 1974 unemployment in the Federal Republic rose 3½ times as fast as in France, 5½ times as fast as in Britain, and 28 times as fast as in Italy. The fact is that monopoly capital is able in its own way to slow down the rate of inflation slightly—but only at the expense of a ruthless increase in unemployment, as the case of the Federal Republic proves.

The government of the Federal Republic has boasted for over a year now that they, in contrast to other imperialist countries, have 'mastered' inflation. All that this amounts to is that prices are still rising but not faster than in the previous year. Indeed, other imperialist countries have now decided to follow the West German example, and the OECD actually envisages a replica of the Federal Republic's programme for all monopoly capitalist countries. The OECD forecasts that from the fourth quarter of 1974 to the fourth

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quarter of 1975 the rate of inflation will be slowed down from about 16 per cent to about 11 per cent—and that the number of unemployed will increase by 40 per cent. In other words monopoly capital 'plans' a renewed rising of prices by 11 per cent for 1975, and a simultaneous growth in the number of unemployed by 40 per cent. But it also 'plans' a reduction in the rate of inflation, and each percentage point of the reduction, not of prices, but in the rate of price increases, will be bought with an increase in the number of unemployed by 8 per cent.

Under conditions of monopoly capitalism, there is no inherent connection between the development of inflation and unemployment. Thus, for example, the cost of living and the percentage of unemployment among German trade unionists in 1920-23 (the period of the highest inflation ever experienced anywhere in the world) was as follows:

Year	Cost of Living (1913=100)	Percentage Unemployed
1920	1,044	3.8
1921	1,337	2.8
1922	15,036	1.5
1923	159,000 million	10.2

In the past we saw that prices fell during cyclical crises of overproduction, i.e. deflation rather than inflation was the order of the day, while unemployment rose. The present cyclical crisis of overproduction is an exception. In 1974 prices further increased and the cost of living went up more than in 1973, while at the same time nemployment increased.

In all previous cyclical overproduction crises, prices fell because the stocks of unsold goods piled up as a consequence of a diminishing purchasing power of the workers, and the capitalists consequently lowered their prices in severe mutual competition to get rid of their goods. In the present crisis, stocks are also piling up and the purchasing power of workers is diminishing. But why are prices not reduced? Because the state (or state monopoly capitalism) has supplied the monopolies with colossal subsidies, and by this method has (1) allowed the monopolies to demand ever-higher prices, without having to get rid of their stocks, and (2) increased its own colossal borrowing for reasons of financing subsidies to the monopolies by printing more money, i.e. by stoking up inflation.

But it is by no means imperative that during the present cyclical crisis of overproduction the long-term inflationary tendency always

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outweighs the short-term deflationary tendency. At the start of 1975, prices on the world market for raw materials are on an average already lower than at the beginning of 1974, because, in the wake of a slowing down of world industrial production, fewer raw materials are needed and the stock of raw materials is growing. It is quite on the cards that in 1975 the rate of the increase of inflation measured by the cost of living may slow down in 'some' countries compared with 1974, while in others it might increase even more rapidly. It is therefore not improbable that the unevenness in the development of inflation in the imperialist countries already observed in 1974 will become quite extraordinary in 1975.

An increase in the gross national product in 1975, according to OECD forecasts, will become a non-event. OECD calculations tell us what has happened and what is likely to happen:

Real Gross National Product Increases

1973	6 per cent
1974	¼ per cent
1975	½ per cent

Obviously the estimate for 1975 makes nonsense. This is not because it could not happen as tabulated, but because no responsible economist can possibly make such an exact forecast. Let us assume first of all that the estimate is correct. Let us further assume that labour productivity, because of further rationalisation and other technical progress will increase by 3 per cent. This would mean that, with an increase of GNP by ½ per cent in 1975, 2½ per cent fewer workers would be needed than in 1974 to produce the GNP. But, as the work force in the imperialist countries (on the basis of higher births in the relevant years) will increase in 1975, and because the percentage of unemployed in the imperialist countries in 1974 reached about 3 per cent, we must count on a doubling of unemployment in 1975 compared with 1974. This assumption of a doubling of unemployment accepts the OECD estimate of a GNP rise of ½ per cent, and accepts the thesis that the crisis will not deteriorate.

But, as the OECD forecast of the GNP for 1975 will prove far too optimistic, we must reckon with more than a doubled unemployment in 1975 compared with 1974.

In the US unemployment has already reached its highest peak since 1940, and in the Federal Republic its highest since 1958. Throughout the imperialist countries, 1975 will without doubt be the year of highest unemployment since 1939. The Federal Republic alone among all the others may be able to boast that they had fewer

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unemployed in 1975 than in 1945 and 1946, i.e. the years after the complete collapse of the fascist economy.

At the last Nato meeting it was pointed out that the imperialist governments represented had each changed their head of government within the previous year. At the last EEC meeting it was also noticeable that almost all heads of government had altered their economic policies during the last half-year, inasmuch as that they no longer considered galloping inflation to be the crucial problem in their economic crisis, but increasing unemployment.

At the same time, it is well known that in all these governments there exist minority wings—in one or two it is the majority wing—who represent those sections of monopoly capitalism who have no objections to a further increase in unemployment, so as to be able to depress real wages all the more effectively. It is a fact that in all imperialist countries, in most of which real wages in spite of inflation still increased in 1973, the purchasing power of the working people decreased in 1974, and monopoly capitalism seeks to hasten this decline even more in 1975.

At the same time it cannot be denied that in some industrial branches of the monopoly capitalist world real wages increased in 1974, and particularly in those where successful strikes or strike threats occurred. In general, strike activities under monopoly capitalism have increased in 1974 as compared with 1973, and these strikes often largely prevented the monopolists from shifting the burdens of the crisis on to the shoulders of their workers.

Workers today, under the leadership of communist and workers' parties, demand a general price freeze in their fight against inflation. Can such demands be realised without the downfall of monopoly capital? We believe it can be done, and there have been occasions when workers have achieved a temporary price freeze which has at least slowed down the rate of inflation. In their fight against unemployment, workers today demand take-over bids and continued working of plants and factories, which would otherwise have closed down, by the state. Under monopoly capitalism, such demands are very realistic indeed, and such take-over bids by the state, or government participation incidents, have already occurred in a number of cases.

Such successes by the workers mean by their very nature a restraint on the freedom of action by the monopoly capitalists, and are therefore of great political significance. They provide, at the same time, a relative easing of the situation for the workers in the midst of an economic crisis.

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WOMEN'S HUNGER MARCHES

Burnley to London, Hunger March—1932

Maud Brown was the organiser of the Women's Hunger Marches in 1932, 1934 and 1936, and of the National Unemployed Workers' Movement in Wal Hannington's absence from about 1929 onwards. She writes:

'When I look back on old days and struggles, I realise that the conditions of life for working women have improved but little in my time. I was a member of the Edmonton Board of Guardians at a time when unemployment often meant separation of husband and wife in the workhouse, and the Relieving Officer would insist on the sale of any article of furniture before he gave an unemployed man a food voucher.

'In the twenties and thirties, hunger marches were aided by contingents of women from many parts led by such women as Emmie Lawther from Durham, Mrs Chater from Newcastle, Laura Johnson from Nottinghamshire and Fanny Deakin from Staffordshire. Harried by police and workhouse staff, these demonstrations had some hard-won success. They encouraged the fight against the means test and resisted Margaret Bondfield's efforts to force single women into domestic service.

'The means test still exists, however. Housing, it seems, is now in a worse condition than it was then. The fight for school meals still goes on. The children's milk has been taken away. Those women who are young now must not fail to remember that what has been won has to be kept. During this International Women's Year our old struggles should be kept constantly before all militant women.'

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Marchers arrive at Co-op Hall, Holloway, London, 1932

Marchers near St Albans on way to London, 1936

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Halt for a meal—1934

Emmie Lawther, two Scottish marchers and Maud Brown, 1936

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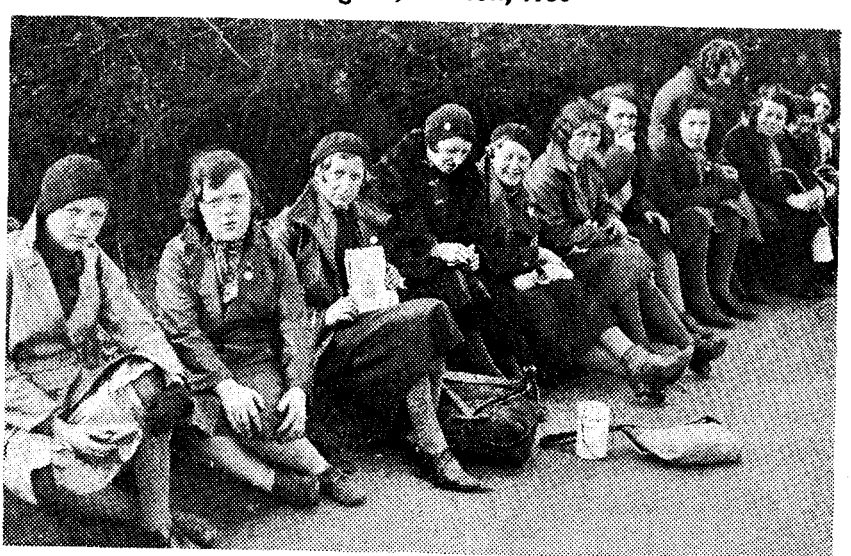
Women marchers being given a civic welcome by the mayor of Islington, London, 1936



Unemployed marchers take a rest, 1934

The pictures on pages 119-122 are from Maud Brown's collection of photographs

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THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND THE SOCIALIST MOVEMENT

W. H. Evans*

RECENT renewed interest in the 'environment' in general, and in the 'built environment' in particular, raises afresh numerous issues: agricultural policy, population growth, housing, transport, pollution, and the whole destructive wastefulness of the capitalist economy. As capitalism slips further and further into decline, there is much here which demands of the working class movement that it formulate with ever greater clarity both its alternative socialist strategy, and its immediate campaigning demands.

It would be well, though, to remind ourselves that these are not by any means new problems for the labour movement: the reactionary theme of 'population pollution' has been one which socialism has contended with at least since the time of Malthus; nineteenth-century radical thought from Victor Hugo to Kropotkin was much concerned with restoring a proper balance between town and country; and the Utopian socialists, Owen and Fourier, regarded their new forms of human settlement as the mould in which the new society could be cast. The most potent ingredient in British town and regional planning is still (in spite of recent backsliding) that which stems from these Utopian beginnings, and develops via 'arts and crafts', 'municipal socialism' and the 'garden city movement'.

We should remind ourselves also that the scientific socialism of Marx and Engels has been no less involved. It was Marx himself who led the rout of Malthus, and Engels who, while warning against the pitfalls of Utopianism, drew approving attention to the Utopians' aim of limiting the size of the town and reuniting town and country. In Book One of *Capital* will be found several footnotes quoting approvingly from Liebig on the 'natural laws of agriculture', and a discussion of that most 'modern' of topics—ecology. In a footnote to the chapter on capitalist accumulation, Marx comments that 'for a century and a half England has been indirectly exporting the soil of Ireland, without giving its cultivators any means for returning to the land the constituents of which it has been deprived.' And in the

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This article is the first of two dealing with the 'environmental question', and is concerned primarily with town planning. In our next issue, Pauline Robinson will be writing on 'An Ecological Look at Environmental Planning'.

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chapter on large-scale industry he writes:

> With the constantly increasing preponderance of urban population aggregated in the great centres, capitalist production increases, on the one hand, the mobility of society, while destroying, on the other, the interchange of material between man and the soil, that is to say the return to the soil of its constituents that are used by human beings in the form of food and clothing—a return which is the permanent natural essential for the maintenance of the fertility of the soil. Thus it simultaneously destroys the physical health of the urban worker and the mental welfare of the rural worker. But, while thus destroying the natural and spontaneously developed system for the circulation of matter from the soil to human beings, and from human beings back to the soil, it necessitates the systematic restoration of such a circulation as a regulative law of social production, and its restoration in a form adequate to the full development of mankind. . . . Moreover, every advance in capitalist agriculture is an advance in the art not only of robbing the worker, but also of robbing the soil; every advance in the fertility of the soil for a given period of time, is simultaneously an advance towards the ruin of the permanent sources of this fertility. The greater the extent to which a country tends to start its development upon the foundation of large-scale industry (as does the United States, for instance), the more rapid is this process of destruction.

It is no accident, however, that the only work of Marx and Engels to deal at any length with 'environmental' matters is that of Engels on *The Housing Question*. For the urban working class this was and has remained a central issue, along with wages, hours and conditions of work. Official housing policy over the whole period of modern industrial capitalism could itself be taken as a measure of the political health of the working class: cramped and shoddy building, high rents and overcrowding representing weakness; improved standards, lower rents and higher housing production representing strength. There is no more eloquent contrast here than that of the recent past: compare the pre-fabs, new towns and council housing resulting from the victorious mood of 1945, with today's Tory legacy of high rents, reduced standards and housing shortage.* Although the whole question (especially of building societies, mortgages and home ownership) would now bear a fuller investigation than Engels found necessary, there would seem to be no reason for the labour movement to change its long-standing central demand for more and more publicly-owned housing at lower and lower rents.

But even as they affect the urban working class, the problems of 'environment' cannot be confined to houses and rents. Indeed, any attempt to deal with these will sooner or later bring in train other

* For a useful account of recent experience in 'urban renewal' see *Politics and Land Use Planning: The London Experience*, Stephen L. Elkin, *Cambridge University Press*, 196 pp., £4.

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questions: Where are the houses to be? What other things should be built with them? How are they to be grouped? How are they to be served with water, power, transport? What will be the consequences for agriculture, mineral extraction, industrial location, rural conservation and urban renewal? In the developing socialist countries these are already being tackled as vitally important policy matters, and much will be learnt from their achievement. But Britain's experience remains unique. She is the most urbanised country in the world, and the first to experience the modern industrial conurbations. While it needs no more than the experience of everyday life in Britain to know how small has been the success of those who have set out to plan our cities and control their growth, there is much worthy of study in the ideas about town and regional planning that have developed here over the past century.

Regional planning, and the impact of the city upon the total environment, is too wide a topic for a short article, but it raises in general the whole question of social production and of population distribution *vis-à-vis* natural resources, touched on in the passage from Marx quoted above. Here, the excessive concentration in south-east England and the Midlands, and the corresponding depopulation and decline elsewhere, keep alive the popular demand for regionalism and decentralisation, especially as this affects investment in new roads, power stations and towns. But we must beware the deceitful twist capitalism gives to these slogans. Such decentralisation as we have so far got has resulted effectively in the spreading out of existing conurbations over wider areas, adding still further to problems of water supply, communications and rural conservation—to say nothing of economic and cultural imbalance. And 'regionalism' is today the banner under which really *local* government is threatening to disappear.

On the more confined issues of the urban environment and its impact upon the town dwellers, the deficiencies of capitalist policy are only too apparent, and the socialist alternative is (in a word) socialism. Without the fundamental change in ownership and the whole direction of social production away from private profit and towards social well-being, there can be no lasting remedy. But we face the immediate problem of combating harmful policies while campaigning for the positive alternatives, some of which are to some extent realisable even within capitalism.

Recent urban redevelopment has been directed towards the intensification and extension of 'central areas' at the expense of inner suburbs. Multi-storey office blocks and supermarkets have replaced

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homes, modest professional 'chambers', and whole streets of little shops. At the same time, there has been a shift from factory to office employment. The inevitable result is traffic congestion as workers and shoppers from ever-wider catchment areas throng in ever-greater numbers into central areas. The primary aim of urban transport policy has been the accommodation of the automobile, and this has resulted in still further 'urban renewal' to replace homes with roads, in the run-down of public transport, and the replacement of what still remained of the traditional, human, pedestrian scale in our towns, with the super-human scale of the motorway and the skyscraper.

Progressive thought among town planners has long been opposed to these policies, and (as the obvious bankruptcy of official policy becomes more and more apparent) the mobilisation of popular support behind it may now bring some positive results. It is necessary to realise that the large scale of modern industry makes it unlikely that the large city will disappear. The problem therefore is to break down the sprawling conurbation into what has been called a 'constellation of neighbourhoods' each element of which should provide an environment adequately served with local facilities, compatible with the pedestrian scale of everyday domesticity, and linked via an efficient transport system to employment and other centres too vast to be contained within them. Where this pedestrian scale still survives, as in the older parts of many towns, it should be defended. The starting point for all policy should not be the motor-car, but the pedestrian—especially the very young and the old—moving about his or her daily business from home to school or shop, or from home to the public transport system which (as no one now doubts) will have to take most of us to work. The popular base of local government should be at the truly local level of the neighbourhood, and a determined effort is needed to demand the setting up of the neighbourhood councils permitted in recent legislation. At the same time, we must keep a wary eye on those who, if unopposed, will seek to turn popular demands for better public transport and improved local identity into policies for herding the under-privileged into class and racial ghettoes and pricing the working class motorist back on to an inadequate bus system and out of the way of the managing director's Rolls.

Technically—especially in terms of transport systems—much remains to be learnt before every aspect of new policies like these will be clear. But there is no doubt that the time is ripe for the working class movement to give a lead to the many sporadic civic

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societies and conservation groups which already receive wide support, but which, without working class involvement, are always in danger of degeneration into ineffective cliques for the defence of the *status quo*. It is necessary, too, to rescue town planning from current official tendencies which seek to turn it away from its humanist and socialist roots towards a soulless, technical exercise, intended to promote the interests of the monopolies against every other section of the population.

INFLATION

Pat Sloan

'ONE man's meat is another man's poison,' says an old adage. And this nowhere applies so well as to capitalist society. 'Unemployment up . . . shares up.' We've had it all before, and the latest sensational example was on January 24. Then, just when all the media were crying 'crisis, crisis', and echoing the establishment's appeals for a tightening of belts, just at that moment the stock exchange experienced a boom which the *Sunday Times* (January 26, 1975) described as the 'biggest one-day rise ever', while in the preceding three weeks share prices had already risen by almost 50 per cent. Or, as the *Economist* put it on February 1, 1975: 'Investors on the London stock market are 73 per cent richer than 24 days ago . . . the sort of lurch that makes the ordinary anti-capitalist regard the stock exchange as a casino.' (Incidentally, it is not only 'ordinary anti-capitalists' that feel like this, for in his day the arch capitalist economist, Lord Keynes, also likened the stock exchange to a casino.)

This synchronisation of high unemployment and high share prices is not new. It is part of the ugly face of capitalism: while workers are in fear for their jobs the smug shareholders sit on their backsides and watch their share prices rise without lifting a finger—unless to sell.

But why did it happen just now? The media have been rounding up opinions, and, though they vary, one anti-red thread links them all. On January 25, 1975, the *Times* explained the boom as being because 'the government and the TUC will stand firm on wage inflation and uphold the social contract.' Not one word—of course—on profit inflation and it is to be hoped that workers will note the profitability to shareholders of the 'social contract'.

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On January 26, 1975, Sue Arnold in the *Observer* compiled a list of businessmen's opinions. These meandered over 'the successful meeting of the EEC finance ministers in London', 'the CBI's friendly visit to Downing Street', 'The Chancellor's address to the nation', falling interest rates and the agreement to recycle petro-dollars. In conclusion the writer interviewed a stockbroker whose reply is a most telling summing up: 'There are only two things that make a market move . . . fear and greed. Now that the government has finally made the U-turn from the brink of the precipice, we've all stopped being frightened and can get on with money making again.'

So this stockbroker's answer is quite simple: Greed, egged on by the Wilson government. This is the anti-red thread running through all the comments.

On the same day the *Sunday Times* went into detail about the crisis affecting Britain. And as to the boom, it sang a similar song, putting interest rates first and then going on to the 'change of emphasis within the government. The Prime Minister and Chancellor have spoken toughly' (not to the capitalists or the monopolies) 'about the social contract and inflation; orthodox economic thinking is making more of the running. And unemployment is rising sharply.'

As to 'orthodox economic thinking', the nation has just been treated to a new book, by economists of establishment stature, called *Crisis '75?* The *Times* on January 31, 1975, published an elaborate review of this book, tabulating the main points discussed and indicating where the various writers stood.

Of the 16 contributors, it appears that almost all agreed that 'living standards must fall', that the 'social contract' was unworkable, that 'monopolistic bargaining' by trade unions plays a 'significant' part in inflation (but not a whisper about monopoly price-fixing). They also agree that government 'obsession with full employment' is also partly responsible. In short, these 16 establishment economists say what paid economists of capitalism are expected to say, and what the paid government of capitalism (even with a Labour label) is expected to agree with.

The *Economist*, summing it all up on February 1, 1975—apart from the reference to the 'social contract', combats the view that 'nothing had happened since January 6 to improve the prospects for the profitability of British industry by one brass farthing, let alone by 73 per cent.' In fact, it says, 'stock markets have turned round because politicians have turned round, and are now more intent upon fighting unemployment than inflation. Thus taxes are being cut and interest rates being brought down.' Governments, says the

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Economist, now want to boost 'industrial investment rather than consumption, and this makes them more anxious not to antagonise industrialists.' The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) at Downing Street was led to understand that 'Mr Tony Benn's parlour bolshevism is over and that Britain is now to be subjected . . . to Mr Harold Wilson's Tory rule.' (Harold Wilson's loving 'obituary' to Heath as defunct Tory leader in the House of Commons at question time came as an appropriate footnote to this comment from the *Economist*.)

At the present time, as never before, the capitalist class in Britain is demonstrating its incapacity to manage the economy. Politically it is in a state of crisis which, given a vigorous Labour policy, could really mark a turning point in British history. But alas at the very time that the Tories are in turmoil the Labour government, far from pressing home at least the decisions of the Labour Party conference, have performed a 'U-turn'. The 'parlour bolshevism' of Tony Benn, clearly based on Labour Party conference decisions, has been cast aside, and the CBI and monopoly capitalism are encouraged by the more and more open espousal by Wilson and his bodyguard of what the *Economist*—and the *Economist* should *know*—calls 'Toryism'.

To the ordinary worker who *earns* his income, the sudden rise in stock exchange prices is yet one more object lesson of how, under this present system, *unearned* incomes are made. And so long as any government, claiming allegiance to Labour, allows this sort of thing to continue, the *Economist*—as spokesmen of Anglo-American monopoly capital—is right in welcoming its 'Tory' policies.

LABOUR MONTHLY FIFTY YEARS AGO

The repudiation of election pledges by the Labour government has been shameless. Mr MacDonald, in excusing his breaches about the ex-ranker officers and the police strikers, declared that candidates should not be asked to give pledges! Why should the electors vote for unpledged candidates? A pledge is the honourable bargain on which the member is elected. Honour apparently does not remain an element in the character of Labour ministers *after* election any more than in the characters of Liberal or Tory ministers.

The attitude of the cabinet . . . I consider important as evidencing the fact that the cabinet has no intention of bringing about such changes in the methods of government in this country as must precede the development of these fundamental reforms in the social system which I had always believed the labour-socialist movement stood for.

From 'The Political Defeat of the Working Class', by C. H. Norman, *Labour Monthly*, March 1925

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HEROINES OF VIETNAM

Hilda Vernon

'WITHOUT drawing the women into social service, into the militia, into political life, without tearing the women away from the stupefying domestic and kitchen atmosphere it is impossible to secure real freedom, it is impossible to build a democracy, let alone socialism,' wrote Lenin (Letters from Afar, No 3, March 1917).

Millions of women all over the world constitute the great reserve army of the battle for progress and socialism. Though women have the most to gain from a socialist society, far too few play an active, conscious part, even in the struggle for immediate and realisable reforms. Imprisoned by traditions, social customs and morals, the teaching of most religions, and legal and economic inferiority, it is no wonder they cannot see the way to break the chains that enslave them.

For so many of them, the extremity of poverty in which they have to struggle, simply to preserve life itself, calls on all their strength and courage. There is a striking passage in R. P. Dutt's *India Today*. After recounting the conditions of six Bombay families living in one room, he writes:

> It is a pity that Miss Katherine Mayo (whose book, *Mother India*, follows the familiar theme of the upper class woman's lecture to poor people about their insanitary habits) could not be compelled to live under these conditions for twelve months, with the same income as her twenty-nine fellow occupants of one room, and have a baby in their midst. She would soon change her tune and learn to direct her anger elsewhere than against the victims of these infamous conditions who so heroically maintain life through it all.

Conditions for women in Vietnam were as bad as anywhere. French colonialism, imposed on feudalism of a most reactionary social structure, drained the country's wealth. Amongst the peasantry, the overwhelming majority of the population, the whole family had to work the land, including the children. Their lot was grinding poverty, sometimes famine. Infant mortality was high. One woman told me:

> We call the date of our August revolution our birthday. Under the old regime women were stifled; we had no rights of any kind. We never left the village, for there was no reason nor anywhere to go. Now we go everywhere. I myself was elected deputy to the National Assembly in January 1946. I placed my three children with families I could trust and set out to walk to Hanoi.

Yes, much has changed. Women had always taken part in the long history of Vietnam's independence struggles; with the establishment

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of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam they excelled themselves. The new government faced tremendous difficulties—raging famine to be overcome and defence organised against imperialist enemies already in action. Without support from the women, this could not be done. Legislation ensured them full rights; propaganda teams toured the country explaining the benefits the new social base would bring especially to those most oppressed in the past, and what must be done to preserve it. Imbued with a new self-confidence, as equal and valued citizens, women responded to the call of the government in their thousands.

In the resistance war against the French they fought as guerrillas and members of the People's Liberation Army. They supplied the army with food from their meagre resources; trudged miles through jungles and over mountains carrying munitions and other supplies; nursed the wounded and sick; set up schools; worked in the jungle workshops. They kept watch on the enemy and gave vital information to the Army.

The full story of the women of the South in the long war against American imperialism since the 1954 Geneva Agreements and the division of Vietnam has yet to be written. They have produced thousands of brave and capable leaders and fighters, among them Nguyen Thin Binh, Foreign Minister of the Provisional Revolutionary Government, and Nguyen Thi Dinh, Deputy Commander of the Liberation Armed Forces. Women formed the greatest part of the popular forces of resistance against the brutal measures and pacification schemes of the US and their Saigon collaborators, and again in the series of uprisings in the rural areas during 1959-60 that laid the basis from which the liberation struggle developed into the force that inflicted such devastating defeats on the US aggressors. It was largely the women who smashed the strategic hamlets scheme, thus creating conditions for the Liberation Armed Forces and people to defeat the US 'special war' strategy and topple the Ngo Dinh Diem dictatorship in 1964. The glorious 'army of the long-haired' carried out the persistent campaign among the puppet forces. They have been the main untiring supply-carriers to the front line. Many thousands of women and girls fought and shared in the victories of the great offensives of 1968 and 1972.

In the 20 years since the Geneva Agreements, the women in the North have gone far in the national effort to build the socialist base, as these few figures show. There are 125 women deputies in the National Assembly, nearly one-third of the total; 11 are vice-ministers. In provincial and municipal councils 35 per cent are women,

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and the same is true of all the levels of administration, right down to the village councils. In agriculture, still the largest labour force, nearly two-thirds are women who work both in the state farms and the co-operatives, many holding leading positions in the directing committees and administration. More than one-third of qualified agro-engineers, with the task of improving and modernising agriculture, are women. They constitute 42 per cent of workers and employees, 52 per cent of handicraft workers and nearly 60 per cent in the public health service, including 22 per cent of fully qualified doctors and nearly half of the qualified pharmacists. Women outnumber men in the educational institutes. Women and girls seeking entry into any trade or profession and all branches of education and technical training encounter no barriers, and of course rates of pay are the same as men's.

I well remember a visit to Namh Dinh, the big textile centre where most of the work force are women. My guides showed me the newly constructed housing blocks and schools; it was with pride that they took me to the crèches and kindergartens within the factory complex. 'Do your women workers have crèches like this?' they asked. 'No,' I had to admit. 'Ah, ours is a socialist state. We are honoured both as mothers and workers. Our President Ho Chi Minh has said: "Our people are very grateful to the mothers of our country who have given birth to and nurtured so many heroes".'

That evening I took part in a demonstration of many thousands. We marched through the town to celebrate the anniversary of the Geneva Agreements which had made possible these big changes in the lives of the Vietnamese people. It was a very short period of peaceful construction. Soon after, the US launched its air war on the North. Namh Dinh was marked out for obliteration, and the housing estates and most of the factory buildings, along with the crèches, were destroyed.

In this further chapter in the epic of patriotic wars fought by the Vietnamese people, once again the women played a heroic role as members of the anti-aircraft brigades formed in every enterprise and farm, they learned how to handle the weapons and bring down enemy planes. At the same time they maintained, and often increased, production although under constant attack. When it became necessary, they helped dismantle the machinery and evacuate it to a safer area and started up production again. The teachers took the children into the hinterland and managed to keep their education going even while having to construct makeshift classrooms. In every sphere women substituted for the men mobilised into the armed

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defence forces. Night after night women's brigades went out to repair the bridges, roads, railway lines and irrigation systems attacked by the bombers.

Now the women are a powerful force in the task of once more healing the wounds of war, rebuilding what was destroyed and furthering the socialist development of production, culture and all aspects of society. Their splendid record proves that they will exert every effort to meet what this great undertaking demands of them.

RAJANI PALME DUTT — GREAT SON OF THE INDIAN PEOPLE

Dilip Bose

(*In a letter which accompanied the following article, Dilip Bose wrote: 'I must humbly say that though I was RPD's fortunate disciple from 1947-54, and had taken him round Calcutta from April 30 to May 3, 1946, I am unworthy of writing this tribute. It is only because of certain aspects of his character (his Indian background, and the influence of his father on his life) that I am prompted to write. All-India Radio had announced on the morning of December 21 the news that he had died. We held a highly successful public condolence meeting, with a large attendance, in Calcutta on January 2, 1975, addressed by Comrade R. Rao, general secretary of the Communist Party of India (CPI), and by Comrade Biswanath Mukherjee, state leader of the West Bengal CPI. I was among others who also addressed the meeting.'*)

IT was the first of May, 1946. A big gathering of the workers of Calcutta were holding their May Day meeting in the late afternoon under the auspices of the All-India Trade Union Congress. A tall Englishman, a comrade from Britain, but olive-skinned and therefore looking more like somebody from the Mediterranean countries or from northern India, his eyes very bright behind thick lenses, his voice often rising to the pitch of a roar when making a point, was addressing this meeting. He was bringing home to the working class of Calcutta on this May Day of 1946 the message of international solidarity in the new world that was opening with the victory of the socialist and democratic forces over fascism, and the role of the Indian working class in the coming decisive struggle for national freedom. All this time the sky was getting darker and darker as the

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storm clouds of one of our nor'westers, usual in the months of April and May, were gathering in the south-east.

The tall Englishman was our comrade, Rajani Palme Dutt (or RPD, as he is affectionately called and known in India), who had earlier declared in another public meeting of the citizens of Calcutta that this was his first visit to India and Calcutta, where his father was born and his forefathers also flourished. He was visibly moved to say this as the citizens of Calcutta thronged to welcome this scion and bright star of the famous 'Dutt family of Rambagan of Calcutta'. Incidentally, Comrade R. Palme Dutt's great uncle was Romesh Chandra Dutt, scholar, novelist and historian of the nineteenth century, whose book on the economic history of the early British rule in India still remains the classic study on the subject from a liberal standpoint.

Comrade R. Palme Dutt was to address another May Day meeting later in the evening in the industrial suburbs of Calcutta, directly organised under the auspices of the Communist Party of India (CPI). We raced to the meeting, braving the storm, later followed by the usual rains, but one of the heaviest downpours even by the standards of our tropics. No proper meeting could be held, and all of us, including Comrade Dutt, were drenched to the skin. We were very worried, rushed him to where he was staying in Calcutta, and made sure he had a hot bath. Luckily he was all right, and the very next morning his first request was to go back to those workers. This he did in mid-afternoon: he held three factory gate meetings with the temperature touching 110 degrees Fahrenheit.

The year 1946 was a stormy one in our struggle for freedom. Earlier, in the month of February, following the revolt of the 'Royal' Indian Navy and the armed forces, unprecedented repression was let loose by the British Labour government of Attlee on the Bombay working class, as they had dared to fraternise with the RIN strikers. At the same time Clement Attlee hurriedly despatched the Cabinet Mission to India to negotiate with the national bourgeois leadership of the Congress and the League. The subsequent story is known: it led to the transfer of power to the upper class leadership, though the country was partitioned into India and Pakistan. Comrade Dutt was covering the Cabinet Mission for the London *Daily Worker*. Being well known in nationalist and other circles far outside the communist movement as a fighter for our freedom, he was much sought after by our press, and he also toured throughout the length and breadth of our land.

His father, Upendra Krishna Dutt, born in Calcutta in 1857, left

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for England to study medicine as a young man, and eventually settled there. Palme was the family name of his Swedish wife. Rajani (Bengali for 'night'), so named because he was born at night, was given this first name directly at the request of his family members at home, with whom Upendra Krishna used to keep in regular contact. Upendra Krishna settled as a poor man's doctor (a sixpenny doctor) in Cambridge, where his modest home was the familiar and favourite rendezvous of Indian nationalist leaders visiting England. The intense controversy round the 'Moderates' and the 'Extremists' of our national movement (at the time of the Surat session of the Indian National Congress in 1907) found its echo by the fireside of the Dutts in Cambridge. RPD referred to this, in some of his public addresses to the Indian students' meetings in London, as 'my first political baptism'.

This intimate connection of Comrade Rajani Palme Dutt with India, and his love for our people, must be put in its proper perspective in order to understand the forging of the personality that was R. Palme Dutt. This love for our land and our people he first derived from his father. His dedication of *India Today* is to be understood not only in its general sense, but as true to the very letter:

> To the memory of my father, Upendra Krishna Dutt, born Calcutta, India, October 17, 1857, died Leatherhead, England, May 12, 1939, who taught me the beginnings of political understanding—to love the Indian people and all peoples struggling for freedom.

This was, therefore, the source; Marxism gave it the content; and the form was his lifelong dedicated and selfless work for the communist and working class movement of Britain.

We take this opportunity of remembering and acknowledging with due reverence our everlasting debt to our fraternal Communist Party in Britain. It was another (late lamented) comrade, Ben Bradley, who faced rigorous incarceration for more than five years at the Meerut Prison, along with his Indian comrades, including Comrade S. A. Dange, now chairman of the CPI. And it was after Bradley's release and forcible deportation back to England that Comrade R. Palme Dutt and Ben Bradley wrote their famous joint thesis in 1936 (known as the Dutt-Bradley thesis, in the history of our CPI) which helped the Party in India to shed its sectarianism and emerge on the all-India scene as a major national-political force and the first party among those then on the left in India.

Comrade Dutt's *India Today*, written in 1936-39, first published by Victor Gollancz in a Left Book Club edition in 1940, and banned

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by the then British imperialist rulers in India, was printed illegally, chapter by chapter in small type, from the CPI's underground headquarters. Even with the severe restrictions and consequent limited circulation thus imposed, the book had a marked effect far outside the periphery of the communist movement. Comrade RPD later helped this writer to publish a second edition (1947) from Calcutta.

India Today merits an article by itself. What can be said here is that it is not only a pioneer work, but is the only book which analyses the Indian struggle for national freedom in the context of the whole socio-economic and political structure of India from the first days of British rule in 1757. And, of course, it uses the floodlight of Marxism to illumine the path forward for our national struggle for freedom.

In 1935, when Jawaharlal Nehru (later independent India's first prime minister for 17 years till his death) rushed to Europe to be present at his wife's sick-bed as she succumbed to tuberculosis, RPD happened to be living in the Swiss *pension* where Nehru stayed. The long talks they used to have helped Nehru further in a left progressive and socialist direction, a position which RPD had already been taking, particularly from 1927 during his days in Brussels with the League Against Imperialism. After his wife's death, Nehru came back to India as the president-elect of the National Congress for its 1936 Lucknow session, and voiced socialism and the need for broadening the base of the National Congress by securing collective affiliation of the trade unions and peasants' organisations—one of the main points made in the Dutt-Bradley thesis. And this is the tribute Nehru paid to the communists, written at about that time (1935):

> . . . the real understanding communist develops to some extent an organic sense of social life. Politics for him cease to be a mere record of opportunism or a groping in the dark. The ideals and objectives he works for give a meaning to the struggle and to the sacrifices he willingly faces. He feels that he is part of a grand army marching forward to realise human destiny, and he has the sense of 'marching step by step with history'.
>
> (*An Autobiography*, Jawaharlal Nehru, *Bodley Head*, 1936)

No greater tribute has come to a communist from a bourgeois nationalist and anti-imperialist fighter.

We pay our last *pronams* (deepest homage and regards, mingled with respect) to the memory of Comrade Rajani Palme Dutt, and pledge to carry on the noble work of forging international solidarity of the working class for the cause of freedom and socialism for which he worked till the very last and gave his life.

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'In Memory of RPD'

'It is sad to think he will never write any more Notes of the Month, but he will never be forgotten by his friends and all in the labour movement': Dorothea Belenson, London NW. 'His complete comprehension of the entire political scene made his Monthly Notes compelling reading. He will be profoundly missed': Molly Higginton, Heathfield, Sussex. 'RPD, one of the best teachers of our time': Jack Evans, NUT Executive member, Bristol. 'We hope *Labour Monthly* will continue to play the important role it has done for the last half-century': Ruth and Tony McNally, Coventry. 'I have admired and enjoyed his outstanding analyses of the current scene for nearly 40 years': M. G. Balchin, London SE. 'RPD, always a true friend of the Soviet Union': L. Heywood, Manchester. 'A great Communist internationalist and a great man': Brian and Sonia Bunting. 'Terribly sad at the loss of our Comrade RPD. He has been my guide, teacher and inspirer for so many years.': L. Hadfield, Hyde, Cheshire. 'May 1975 see us move closer to the goal that he never lost sight of': Mick Hobday, Nottingham. 'Please find enclosed a first instalment of a regular guaranteed donation for each of the next twelve months, in memory of RPD': West Ham North Branch, Communist Party. 'To assist in ensuring that *LM* thrives, we will, as of Jan '75, donate through banker's order monthly. With comradely condolences to all at Ballards Lane': Pat and Ruth Farrelly, Reading. 'Palme Dutt, great Marxist creative thinker, fighter, humanist. I trust *LM* will continue in that tradition': Jim Logan, Welwyn Garden City. 'Apart from the great loss he is to us in the movement, he is a great personal loss. I count myself honoured to have known our dear Raji whose inspiration and teaching live on': Gloria Findlay (Devine), Ilford.

£138.25

D Belenson £2, Len Potter £4, Molly Higginton £5, Jack Evans £3, Ruth and Tony McNally £1, S Lovell £2, 'S Mill' £8, M G Balchin £5, L Heywood £2, C Dukes £5, B and S Bunting £3, Z Curtis £1, L Hadfield £5, A McMillan £2, M Hobday £5, 'Belfast' £4, O Holloway £20, S L Bloomfield 40p, West Ham North branch 50p, Pat and Ruth Farrelly £10, Greg and Mirit Douglas £10, West Hampstead branch £16.25, J Logan £1.70, N W Leeds branch £2, Anon 50p, M Pritt £3, Marie Philibert 50p, 'Socialist Sailor' £1, M Beard £1, G Findlay (Devine) £5, R F Inch £6.40, Fleetwood branch £3.

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DR N. N. RAINA
Kashmir University, India

Those of us who actively participated in the 'Quit Kashmir' movement (1946-47) can never forget the decisive contribution of RPD in mobilising support for our just cause by publicising its aims in the face of overwhelmingly hostile propaganda. The working people of Kashmir struggling for a better life will always remember him as a great champion of the exploited and downtrodden peoples of the world, and an embodiment of the international solidarity of the working class.

ACADEMICIAN PETER FEDOSEYEV
Vice-President of the Soviet Academy of Sciences

Soviet scholars, like all Soviet people, knew well and deeply respected comrade Palme Dutt, who had more than once been in our country. He was not only, in the highest sense, a revolutionary internationalist, but also an outstanding theoretician and scholar. A number of his well-known Marxist works on history, economics and political problems were translated into Russian. Among them were *Modern British Reformism, Fascism and Social Revolution, India Today* and *The Crisis of Britain and the British Empire.* In 1965 one of his most considerable works *Problems of Contemporary History* (lectures he had delivered at Moscow State University) was published in the USSR. The academic council of Moscow University conferred on him the honorary degree of Doctor of Historical Sciences.

Comrade Palme Dutt was an outstanding leader, and at the same time historian, of the international communist movement. His book, *The International*, was known all over the world. We were particularly grateful to him for his active part in writing the book on the history of the Communist International, prepared by the Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the Central Committee of the CPSU.

The life of Comrade Palme Dutt—steadfast revolutionary, publicist and scholar, firm friend of the Soviet Union—is a model of loyalty to the cause of the working class and the interests of social progress.

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E. PAPAIOANNOU
General Secretary, Progressive Party of Working People (AKEL), Cyprus

The international communist and working class movement lost in the person of R. Palme Dutt a prominent internationalist, theoretician of Marxism-Leninism and a consistent fighter for freedom, peace and socialism. As an intellectual of the working class Dutt not only kept intact his full faith in the class he served for so many years, but resolutely and consistently upheld the great ideals and principles of Marxism-Leninism and fought against all deviations, right or left. Dutt is well known to Cypriots, and indeed to all peoples fighting to liberate themselves from imperialism, as a staunch fighter and supporter of their struggle. His life and work was devoted to the noblest of causes—communism.

MEIR VILNER
General Secretary, Communist Party of Israel

The passing away of R. Palme Dutt, the great internationalist, who has contributed enormously, politically and ideologically, to the struggle of the British and international communist movement, is a heavy loss for all of us.

We, the veteran communists in Israel, remember him well as an outstanding revolutionary fighter against British imperialism, whether in India or in Palestine. We have always considered him a comrade-in-arms in our complicated struggle, ever since the emergence of Israel and the consequent Middle East crisis, for genuine independence, peace and social progress.

It is one of our cherished memories that R. Palme Dutt participated in the thirteenth congress of our Communist Party of Israel in 1957. We were always aware of his deep interest in the development of our struggles which have become more intense since the June 1967 war.

R. Palme Dutt has left a rich theoretical and political heritage, and we shall always resort to it. R. P. Dutt has been a towering Marxist-Leninist figure for half a century. His loss is therefore the more profound.

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BOOKS

Pit-men, Preachers and Politics
Robert Moore

Cambridge University Press, 292 pp, £5.30

THE ROLE and influence of Methodism in the local labour and trade union movement is assessed in this book on the basis of a small group of pit villages in Co Durham. The period covered is from the 1860s to the present time. The author recognises that the book is a 'detailed study of a small population', and of pits that were not typical of the wider coalfield. One problem in judging the value of this work is that on this limited basis he brings in every blade of grass, and seems to produce some contradictions and confusion in his assessment.

The ownership of these pits was not typical of the early Durham coalfield. The owners were mainly associated with the Pease family, Darlington Quakers, and other small upper class businessmen and landlords, as against the position elsewhere, with Lord Londonderry and his ilk as the Durham coal barons. The author comments that 'Yorkshire owners were prone to use a greater degree of violence against their men than the Durham owners', mentions troops in Pontefract in 1893, but ignores the history of the Durham mining industry with the rule of Lord Londonderry.

When he gets to 1926 the pattern of conflict and struggle indicates that all was not peace and light, and that this area, like Chopwell, saw some battles. During this time 50 policemen were stationed in Esh Winning, 20 miners charged under the Emergency Powers Regulations, 19 fined £2 each, the lodge chairman and secretary sentenced to one month's hard labour, and one of them 'victimised' for 18½ years after the strike. On the bench sat a colliery owner, a pit manager and three others associated with management. The class struggle went on here.

The main thesis of this book is that the effect of Methodism on a working class community was 'to inhibit the development of class consciousness and reduce class conflict', and that whilst Methodism did 'produce political leaders amongst working men it did not produce leaders who could articulate and pursue class interests as such.' As the recent *History of the Northumberland Miners* says: 'In the north the influence of Methodism for many years played a strong part within the union. At the birth of the union this was not surprising, as the Methodist chapel offered the only form of education in the village.'

This strand in the miners, and indeed in the wider labour movement, is one that needs deeper examination. This book seems to ignore that our history is one of 'class struggle and conflict.' For many economic, political and social reasons there has been a failure to win the deeper 'political' consciousness that takes class struggle forward into developing the struggle for 'political' power.

On political history the writer seems ignorant of fact, and completely out of touch with the complex and living working class movement. Talking of Labour Party membership he seems not to know that there was no individual membership of the Labour Party until 1918; his references to the Independent Labour Party (ILP) appear to

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indicate little knowledge of the relations and role this party played inside the Labour Party, and that it did not break from the Labour Party until the 1930s. He talks of the British Socialist Party (BSP) 'taking' Social Democratic Federation, ILP and Clarion Scott socialists out of the Labour Party on its formation, but makes no mention of the fact that, formed in 1911, the BSP decided to affiliate to the Labour Party in 1914. This was delayed until 1916 and, from then until the formation of the British Communist Party in the 1920s, they were a part of the Labour Party.

In confining this book not only to a small area but an area isolated and perhaps untypical of the wider coalfield, any conclusions drawn from this study need constant qualification. I wonder what Robert Moore would have made of W. Straker, staunch chapel man and general secretary of the Northumberland Miners from 1913 to 1935, and hardly, at times, regarded as a 'militant', who yet took the position that the 'excommunication of the Russian trade unionists from the International Trade Union Federation, and the refusal to admit Communists to our Labour conferences are among the greatest blunders that trade unionism and labourism have made.' Or the typical Tommy Jackson story, told in his book *Solo Trumpet,* of Harry Bolton, Chopwell miners' leader and local councillor who, as a prominent chapel man, got Tommy invited to Chopwell chapel and there he preached a sermon on 'Isaiah the Bolshevik.'

This is the other side of the complex story of chapel, union and working class movement and, when the writer of this book says 'any attempt to establish a "typical" period or golden age of the villagers must founder on the simple evidence of continuous social change', he admits the point. To quote Lenin: 'Theory is grey, life is green.' This book is a little too grey.

There have been contradictions in our history, from John Ball and Wat Tyler, the Levellers and the Diggers, the Methodist trade union and Labour pioneers, the conflict between a religious outlook that taught passivity and restraint, and the outlook that sought to face and tackle the problems of day to day life and conflict. To say, as Moore does, that 'socialist trade unionists' face a conflict of interests between seeking to win immediate demands while as a 'socialist he seeks the confrontation that will lead to the conflict which will change the basic economic and social arrangements of the whole society,' is to reveal his own shortcomings, not as a research worker and academic writer, but in understanding our working class history, struggles and experiences.

HORACE GREEN

Wilkes: 'A Friend to Liberty'

Audrey Williamson

Allen & Unwin, 254 pp, £4.95

THE SPARK, the rake, the womaniser, the gambler, the 'merry cock-eyed sprite of a man', as Byron called him, John Wilkes seems at first glance an unlikely candidate for the martyr's crown in the cause of liberty. A far cry from the Monks of Medmenham, popularly known as the Hellfire Club, with its scandalous orgies and Satanic rites, to the defiance of George III and his ministers and the support of the American colonists: but John Wilkes travelled that road and became the symbol for the whole range of freedom struggles of his age,

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sharing that distinction during his lifetime with men like Thomas Paine.

It was comparatively late in life before he forsook the racecourse, the gaming table and his women friends, but his devotion to freedom, first given expression when he wooed the Berwick electors (unsuccessfully) and told them of his 'steady attachment to the cause of liberty', was a lifelong passion.

Wilkes's anti-government publication, the *North Briton,* had been a constant irritant to the king and the ministers from the start. Begun as a counterblast to the ministerial organ, the *Briton,* edited by Tobias Smollett, and to which the arch Tory Dr Johnson was a contributor, the famous No 45 created a parliamentary explosion that 'sent Wilkes soaring across the Channel into exile.'

No 45 of the *North Briton* carried an attack on the speech from the throne which was interpreted as a direct attack on George III, suggesting his participation in deliberate falsification. As the government moved to issue warrants for arrest and search, and Wilkes fled to France, a movement began which was to see the extended exile of Wilkes from Britain, his repeated re-election to the Commons and his stay in prison which became a triumph and a place of pilgrimage for his friends and supporters. This indelibly associated the name of Wilkes with libertarian causes everywhere, not only in Britain but also in America where he became the toast of those chafing under the government's short-sighted policies.

He became the darling of the people of London and other industrial centres, as well as of the burgesses and merchants of the capital, and was eventually Lord Mayor. The story of Wilkes was well worth telling because in a revolutionary age his name was associated with all the major causes of the period. The author does not fall into any uncritical adulation of Wilkes: she can point out his limitations even when he was dealing with George III, and in the later unhappy days of the Gordon Riots she develops an illuminating new view of the underlying causes of those disturbances, thanks to the material she has drawn from the researches of George Rudé.

For its political insights, for its lively view of a great and lively personality, this book is worth reading. A tempestuous age, a volcanic character: and the treatment of both is very helpful.

BEN AINLEY

The Tupamaros

Alain Labrousse

Penguin, 168 pp, 40p

IN TERMS of the urban guerrilla theory, the Tupamaros of Uruguay have been more successful than most. But where does that theory lead? Extract from '30 questions to a Tupamaro':

'Q. What is the fundamental principle on which the activities of your organisation have been based up till now?

'A. The idea that revolutionary action in itself, the very act of taking up arms, preparing for and engaging in actions which are against the basis of bourgeois law, create a revolutionary consciousness, organisation and conditions.'

What it does create is increased repression on the part of the state, not only against the guerrillas, but also against all working class and peasant organisations; ultra-right violence is encouraged. And this is what has happened in Uruguay.

MARGARET GOODWIN

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The Iron Heel
Jack London
Journeyman, 224 pp, 75p

Six Red Months in Russia
Louise Bryant
Journeyman, 202 pp, £1.25

JACK LONDON wrote his novel about what capitalist dictatorship in the US might come to, in its fight against a rebellious working class, in 1907, when the horrors of counter-revolution in Russia had stirred the consciences of millions. Anyone who was an active socialist or sympathiser by 1914 would know it—and multitudes have read the book breathlessly since.

Louise Bryant was in Russia in 1917 with her husband, John Reed, as a correspondent for the Philadelphia *Public Ledger* and other American papers. Her vivid account of talks with the soldiers, workers, politicians of all shades—and revolutionaries—during the months before and after the October revolution was in great demand directly it reached this country in 1919 (I got my copy then). Both books have been out of print for many years; and this new publishing firm deserves every credit for making them available at a low price today.

ANDREW ROTHSTEIN

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It would be easy to see creeping complacency in the middle of leaping inflation if I continued to write in that vein. The real situation is that our fund is a vital part of our financial support, and it must rise to meet rising costs of production. The increase from £93.98 to £106.16 per month is actually only 13 per cent. It doesn't take a *Labour Monthly* reader long to work out that this represents a *real drop,* as inflation runs at something like 20 per cent. Our paper bills are the worst reminder of this, forcing us into every possible economy elsewhere—and making it always necessary for our readers to be directly concerned with *LM's* hard-earned income. So our urgent call is for new contributions to our fund. Everyone is feeling the pinch, so spread the load wider and ask another reader to become a contributor.

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Fighting Auschwitz, Józef Garlínski. Julian Friedmann, 328 pp, £4.25.

The World and China 1922-1972, John Gittings. Eyre Methuen, 304 pp, £5.25

My Queen and I, William Hamilton. Quartet, 276 pp, £3.50.

Rhodesia—White Racism and Imperial Response, Martin Loney. Penguin, 236 pp, 70p.

The Pursuit of Loneliness, Philip Slater. Penguin, 176 pp, 50p.

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The Labour Party and the Struggle for Socialism, David Coates, CUP, 258 pp, £5.

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